DOCTOR WHO

SERIAL N

The Web Planet

BY

BILL STRUTTON

An Adventure in Space & Time

In order to trace the source of the power that has forced the TARDIS down to the surface of Vortis, the Doctor and Ian don their Atmospheric Density jackets, and set off to explore. The weird and wonderful crags of this twilit world conceal many dangers, not least the presence of the ant-like Zarbi and their grub-like larvae guns. Barbara is lured hypnotically from the safety of the ship by a magnetic force acting upon the gold bracelet given her by the Emperor Nero. Slowly she is drawn towards the source of the power, an evil intelligence called the Animus, housed within the khazenome, its gradually spreading web-city. She is intercepted by the butterfly-like Menoptra, who tell her that they are the pilot party of an invasion force being planned for Vortis. The TARDIS, with Vicki inside, is pulled magnetically into the khazenome, and Vicki is soon joined by the Doctor and Ian, themselves captured by the Zarbi patrols. In an attack upon the Menoptra hideout, the Zarbi capture Barbara and one of the Menoptra, Hrostar, and take them away to the Crater of Needles. There they are put to work, feeding crystal spars to the khazenome via the acid pools. The pilot party's leader, Vrestin, was able to avoid capture, and soon encounters Ian, who has escaped from the khazenome. The two join forces, and soon 'fall' in with a race of below-surface people called Optera - the mutant descendants of the survivors who remained on Vortis when the Menoptra were originally pushed into space after the arrival of the Animus many years ago. Ian and Vrestin are able to persuade the frightened Optera to help them return to the khazenome to defeat the Animus. The Doctor and Vicki, meanwhile, have used many ploys to prevent the Animus discovering the stratagem of the attacking Menoptra, information gleaned from the Doctor's Astral Map. Barbara and her group encounter the doomed Menoptra Spearhead, carrying with them the weapon which they hope will kill the Animus - the cell-destroying Isop-tope. At last, all the groups converge upon the Animus, and Barbara is able to destroy the creature before it can destroy them.

DRAMA EXTRACT

"All is not lost!" rang out a strident voice. It came from the direction of one of the shrines of the Temple of Light.

Barbara, Hrostar and Prapillus all turned, the latter straining his old eyes to make out the forms of the two shapes approaching from the shadows. "Who are you?"

"Spearhead leader Hilio," replied the taller of the two Menoptra. The other figure was Hlynia, daughter of Prapillus, who, it transpired, had encountered the Captain on the lower ledge, fleeing from the overwhelming might of the Zarbi ambushers. Together they had been lucky in finding a tunnel and had successfully eluded their pursuers. However, as Prapillus explained to the Spearhead leader, the total failure of the attack the Captain became agitated and in haste to return to the battle. "The Spearhead must succeed," he said desperately. "Which is the way back to the plateau? I will recall my Force."

Barbara spoke up. "What Force? From what I saw of the battle your Spearhead was completely wiped out."

Affronted, Hilio drew himself up to his full height. He strutted towards Barbara and surveyed her alien appearance with haughty disgust. "Who is this creature?" he enquired disdainfully.

"Our ally," answered Hrostar plainly.

"I do not trust her!"

"You have no choice," Barbara emphasised, annoyed by the singularly unpleasant attitude of this young, hot-headed officer.

A sudden whimpering from Hlynia broke the tension. The notion of two people, who should be allies, regarding each other with hostility was the final straw for her, on a day which had already seen too many disasters. She looked at her two companions. "Hrostar, Prapillus. What shall we do?"

His proud stance broken, Hilio too bowed his antennaed head to the logic of reality. "Is it true? Are they all dead?"

"Dead, or prisoners by now," replied the old Menoptra sombrely.

"Then our main Force cannot know where to land. They too will be massacred. The Menoptra will be no more..."

Prapillus shook his aged head in rebuke. "Hilio, the Menoptra have no wisdom for war." He gestured gracefully at their magical surroundings. "Before the Animus came, the flower forests covered the planet in a cocoon of peace. Our ancestors carved temples like this for resting places of our dead; but that was all the work we did. There were no other plans to make. Light was our god and we existed in light - flying above thought."

He paused, aware that their attention was upon him now. He stepped back, allowing the light rays to reflect from his compound eyes, seemingly making them flash with the fire of determination. "Our banishment has taught us of enemies and weapons, and my captivity has taught me strategy. They tore my wings from me and I felt, as you feel, that all was lost. But if our gods favour our survival we must learn their lesson and use our brains and not our wings. This Earthwoman we must trust, for she can show us how to exist without wings - to survive and flourish." He knelt before Barbara. "What should we do?"

DOCTOR WHO - AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE AND TIME

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STORY REVIEW

PAUL MOUNT

To call "The Web Planet" a classic would not only be to use a well-worn cliche, but to be stating the obvious. Careful consideration of this famous six-part serial has led me to the conclusion that it is more of a classic in concept than in realisation.

"The Web Planet" is, quite simply, the most daring and experimental serial ever produced for 'Doctor Who', with a basic idea that has yet to be repeated; the Doctor and his companions the only humanoid protagonists amidst a weird and varied selection of alien life-forms - and for "The Web Planet" they were totally alien, bearing little comparison with what we understand to be human.

Set on the cold, craggy, lunar-like surface of the far-distant Vortis, "The Web Planet" encapsulates the best of all the serials up to this point. Here we are truly distant from Earth, isolated from absolutely everything with which we can identify. On Vortis there is nothing we can recognise from Earth, nothing for us to hang on to; yet the supporting characters are all monstrous manifestations of the insect life we take for granted, but that is all around us: the ant, the butterfly, the grub; symbols of life on Earth, increased to terrifying proportions and placed in a totally alien environment. It's a formula that just can't fail...and it certainly didn't fail in 1965, a fact echoed by author Bill Strutton, who says: "I didn't even have to write the usual formal storyline...I simply talked the idea and its development over with her (Verity Lambert), and she virtually commissioned it on the spot."

The actual visual result is a flawed masterpiece, if only because of the tremendous scope of the story which made some things difficult, if not impossible. For example, few who saw the flying sequences with the Menoptra, particularly when the "suicide army" engages in combat with the Zarbi on the Sayo Plateau, can forget the sheer balletic beauty of the scenes. Swooping gracefully down from the black skies, you'd really believe that a man in a butterfly costume could fly!

It's a tribute to the designers of the period that "The Web Planet" is such a convincing success, for Vortis (despite the staginess of its appearance) really does convince as an alien planet. This alienness is enhanced by some pleasing, eerie but effective stock BBC incidental music. Although the method to produce this music was probably fairly complex, the end result sounds just like a series of wine-glass rims being rubbed by wet fingers. However, I think it has to be said that, despite the atmospheric distractions, after a few episodes, hearing the cast clumping across the wooden set does become a bit wearing. The costumes are all beautifully designed, from the splendid Menoptra, with their exquisite wings, to the Zarbi, formerly a race of mindless "cattle". Evidently intended as competitors to the Daleks, the Zarbi, though fondly remembered by many, are vastly underrated creatures. The "stills" photographs do them little justice, as it's only when they are seen in action, scuttling around under the control of the monstrous, rather spider-like Animus, that their full impact can be appreciated. They are masterpieces of design and highly believable. One of the most chilling and terrifying sequences in the serial occurs when a group of Zarbi, with their 'weapons', the deadly larvae guns, corner Hrostar, and ruthlessly burn off his wings. Barbara, anxiously looking on, turns her head away and begins to cry, realising the full horror of this atrocity. Worth noting here is that the sounds supplied for the Zarbi were

high-pitched, electronic warblings; and the larvae guns, preparing to fire their venom, sounded remarkably like jet-engines building up for take-off.

Probably the least successful of the many aliens in the story are the underground Menoptra, known as Optera. The idea here was to give the impression of a race of caterpillar-like creatures shuffling and leaping beneath the surface of Vortis, a race related to the creatures they revere as their gods, the Menoptra. Unfortunately, they come over as being a little ludicrous, with their jerky, staccato voices, and their bizarre, hopping movements. The most unintentionally funny scene in the serial occurs in the final episode, when a group of Optera are leaping gleefully around in little circles, ostensibly attempting to fly after so many years underground, but giving the distinct impression they are all suffering from simultaneous epileptic fits. However, the Optera aren't awful by any means and, considering the other achievements of the serial, a minor failure is easy to forgive, as it helps to convey their alien nature.

Another odd quality of this strange, rather elusive serial, is in the bizarre way that much of it is filmed. For effect, to aid the alien 'feel' of the proceedings, the camera lenses have been smothered with Vaseline. Whilst this is scarcely noticeable at first (and when it is noticeable, it's quite impressive), as the serial progresses the level of Vaseline application increases in direct proportion. Eventually, things do start to get a little out of hand; and it often becomes difficult to get the hang of exactly what's supposed to be happening on screen. Whether this was done entirely to give more atmosphere, or to hide deficiencies in costume and/or visual effects, is a secret locked forever in the minds of the ageing BBC cameramen involved in that production.

All due credit must also go to the actors involved, who had a tremendous task in bringing over believable characters whilst undoubtedly suffocating beneath butterfly costumes, suspended on wires, or encased in heavy Zarbi rigs. Although it's sometimes difficult to distinguish one character from another, Martin Jarvis, making his first TV appearance as the brash Captain Hilio, is particularly impressive.

The regular cast all work to capacity, save for Vicki who, as usual, plays very little part in the action; but the Doctor, Ian and Barbara are as interesting as ever. The Doctor is his usual aggravatingly brilliant self, and one of the most memorable moments occurs in the final scene of part two, when the transparent, web-like 'hair-dryer' affair slides into place above his head, and speaks to him in the breathless voice of the Animus: "Why do you come now...?"

The Animus itself is the central villain - the cause of the whole trouble on Vortis - using its power to turn the placid Zarbi into lethal killers; to draw other moons into orbit about Vortis; to spread its web out across the surface of the planet, "the creeping destroyer" which drains the life from the land, replacing water with "liquid death" (acid), slowly bleeding the planet dry. From the sanctity of its khazenome* it has banished the peaceful Menoptra from their homeworld, since when they have massed on the planet Pictos. The Animus, when it appears, is quite breathtaking. Something of a cross between a spider and an octopus, it covers an entire set, its rope-like tentacles sprawling everywhere in the final sequences, trapping the Doctor and his aides hopelessly. Although this scene is surprisingly brief (and a little anti-climactic) considering the complex set, it is just another example of the attention lavished on the serial.

"The Web Planet" is undoubtedly a landmark in the progress of 'Doctor Who', and serves as a chilling example of the programme at its pioneering best.

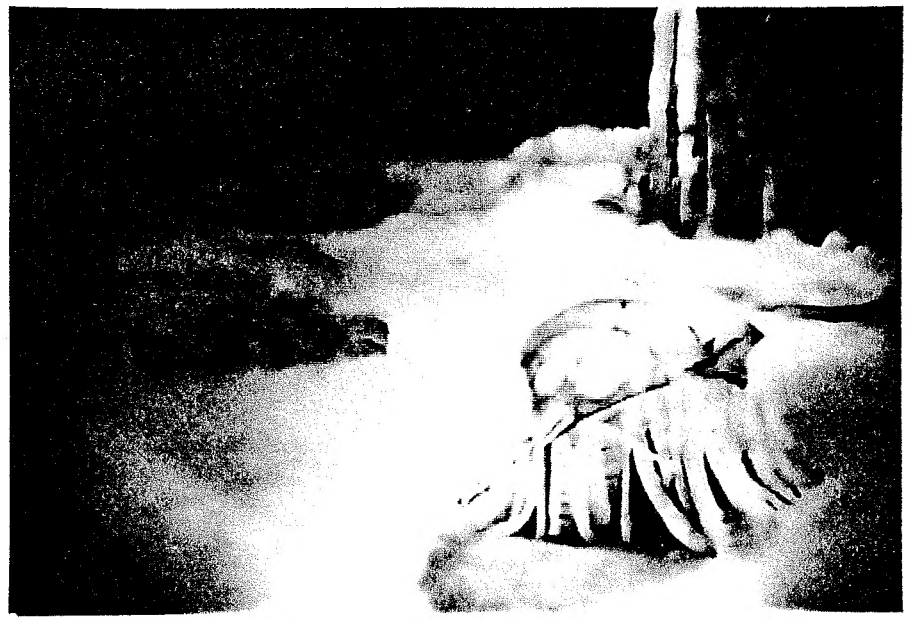
*Bill Strutton gave this serial an added dimension by, first of all, creating special names for particular things (e.g. the web-city was referred to as "the khazenome"). Secondly, the Menoptra possessed two curious speech-patterns: They were unable to pronounce certain words (Ian became 'Heran' and Barbara became 'Harbara'). Phonetically, they pronounced these words in the following way: Animus - "Arnimoos"; Zarbi - Zar-Bi (stressing the 'B'); Vrestin - "Varestin"; Hrostar - "Harostar"; Hlynia - "Halynia"; khazenome - "car-sa-nome".

SPACE and TIME

FLASHBACK

^ The Doctor (William Hartnell) communicates with the Animus, via a web-dome which descends from the ceiling of the control room, deep within the khazenome.

A larvae gun, an earlier stage in the evolution of a Zarbi, scuttles across the craggy surface of Vortis. >

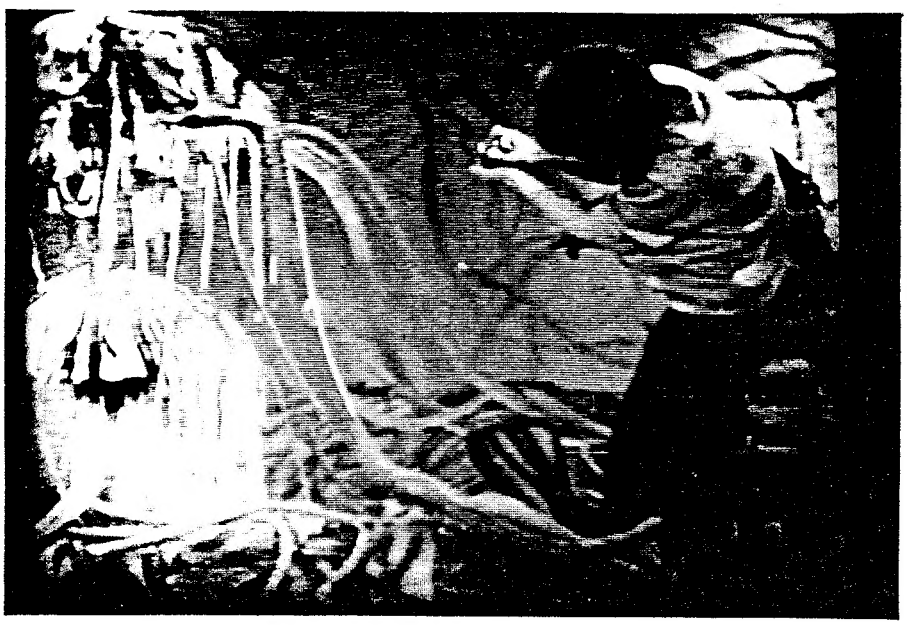


< Vrestin (Roslyn de Winter) strikes a distinctive Menoptra pose, arms held gracefully in front of the body. Here also can be seen the second version of the Menoptra face mask (see 'Costume Design' - "13-09").

(13-08)

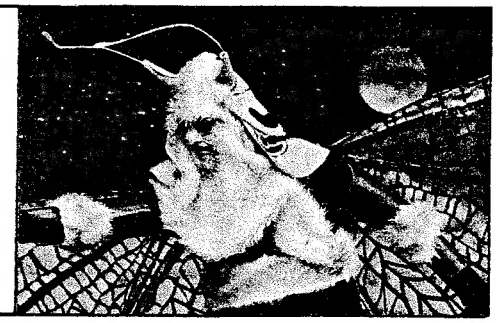
Ian (William Russell) tackles one of the Zarbi guards during his escape from the khazenome.

Ian and Vrestin in the midst of the Optera society existing below the surface of Vortis. Optera Hetra listens keenly to their deliberations. This photograph shows the six-armed costume of the Optera, radically different in appearance to their Menoptra forebears. The Optera wings, "withered on your bodies", can here be seen as thin strands on the back of the Optera.



Barbara uses the Isop-tope to destroy the Animus.

FEATURE:
COSTUME DESIGN
JEREMY BENTHAM

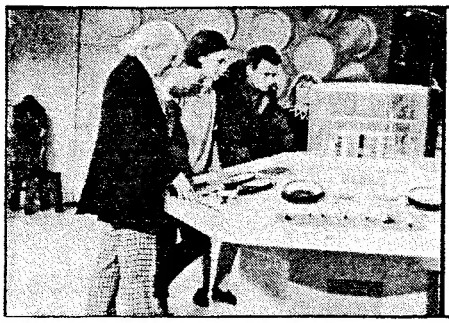


In 1965 job demarcation was not as rigidly defined as it is now, in regard to who did what on the construction of costumes for a production as elaborate as a science-fiction 'Doctor Who' serial. "The Web Planet" called for no less than six different alien costume designs, most of which required close liaison between Daphne Dare, Sonia Markham and John Wood (see 'Production Credits' - "13-12").

Most complex and most expensive to build were the six Zarbi rigs whose interior mechanics were almost as intricate as the Daleks'. Dressing a Zarbi operator took in advance of twenty minutes and could only be done quite close to live recording, due to the uncomfortable posture and stifling interior heat experienced by the actors. To be a Zarbi actors had to be on the small side, somewhere below 5' 6", as their heads and body were required to be crammed into the spherical thorax section of the costume. The three major components - head, thorax and abdomen - were all fibreglass in construction. Styro-foam plastic had been considered but was rejected in favour of tougher fibreglass, which would be less likely to crack in the frequent event of actors knocking against scenery or trying to stand up. Inside the thorax section were the twin wires to operate the front pincers. The pincers were sprung at the mid-pincer joint into the outstretched position, and only by pulling on the thin nylon wires could the actor effect the indicating gestures as the pincers twitched inwards to the body - the wire naturally being connected to the claw end of the pincer. The thorax section was where the actor saw out through a small circle veiled by gauzing. Attached to the thorax was the enclosed head section, which had a small scissor mechanism projecting into the thorax. By opening and closing the scissor handles, the actor could make the Zarbi mandibles flex closed and open, and they were so made as to enable the Zarbi to be capable of picking up lightweight objects (such as the morphatising wishbones). Contrary to popular belief, the Zarbi eyes did not light up from any internal devices; rather, the outer eyes were coated with a light-reflective substance which, under certain camera angles, kicked back off the overhead studio lights. When all this equipment was in place the final section to be hooked onto the Zarbi costume was the abdomen section. Once fastened in place it became impossible for the actor inside to stand upright, as John Scott Martin has frequently bemoaned over the years.

The Menoptra were equally complex creations. Two versions of the Menoptra face masks were made. The versions used for the filming sessions were basically vinyl cowls worn around a rubber frame, which gave it the rigidity to support the wire antennae. The cowls only covered as far down as the eyes, the rest of the face and neck being painted with make-up into the accepted Menoptra markings. Whilst suitable for the film inserts, these masks could not stand up to the more discerning eyes of the telerecording cameras and so, at considerable cost, they were scrapped and rebuilt for the studio sessions. The frame was kept but the new vinyl masks fitted the whole head, leaving only the human mouth visible, requiring make-up. These masks were more detailed and more heavily inlaid with strips of yellow fur. The costumes were basically cat suits, alternately ribbed with bands of black vinyl and yellow fur. Complete with wings, this costume was strangely beautiful, and a credit to those people responsible for its creation. With this attention to the costumes alone, it's not surprising that this production greatly over-ran its budget in the end.

(See also 'Technical Observations' - "13-11")



CHARACTER PROFILES.

TIM ROBINS

There can be little doubt that the inhabitants of the Web Planet present a visually stunning picture of alien life, loosely modelled on the insect life of Earth. The Menoptra are the most stunning of all, with massive, translucent wings which carry them, swooping gracefully, from the sky. The Zarbi, ant-like, with hard shells and giant, compound eyes. The Optera, with startling markings of black and white, large darkened eyes, with feelers snaking over their segmented backs. The larvae guns, wood-louse like, transporting themselves on flowing tendrils.

Reading this precis of some of the creatures encountered in the story, what seems more remarkable is that, beneath the costumed splendour, there are a number of rich character portrayals.

THE MENOPTRA: These creatures are excellently represented by Vrestin and Captain Hilio. Vrestin, leader of the Menoptra pilot party, has the difficult task of preparing the way for the main assault on the Animus. The task seems doomed to failure. Vrestin's speeches, in a fluting voice, are tinged with sadness and pity at what has befallen his race. Deep down, one cannot help but feel Vrestin knows his task is futile. Captain Hilio, however, presents a different picture. To an extent he is unaware of the horrors now on Vortis. When he arrives this places him in instant conflict with Hrostar. The two confront each other like hissing snakes, raising themselves in a ritual combat. This conflict continues throughout the remainder of the story. Hilio represents what the Menoptra must have been like when they ruled Vortis - a somewhat haughty race, proud and superior to the other creatures. Vrestin is a much more likeable character, who tempers leadership with understanding. In one scene he tries to prevent Hrhoonda from killing Barbara as a Zarbi spy. Despite, or perhaps because of, the desperateness of his mission, he tries to avoid needless death.

THE OPTERA: This fascinating race has been much overlooked in the past. Forced to exist in the underground passages beneath Vortis, they have evolved from the Menoptra, losing their wings and gaining four arms. They lead a harsh life of self-sacrifice. When a tunnel is breeched by a hole, letting in acid, an Optera instantly plugs the hole with its body, saving its companions. Confronted by a Menoptra, Vrestin, the Optera at first regard him with suspicion and hostility. They soon learn that Vrestin is a member of the race the Optera have worshipped as gods, little realising that they themselves have descended from them. The fear still remains, though, that when victory is achieved, the Optera will suffer being inferior to the Menoptra. This fear is compounded with their natural dislike of the surface conditions of Vortis, "where the light blinds, the air chokes; where only destroyer races live, and from where none of us who has gone forth has ever returned". Arguing that "you were born to the greatest freedom of all creatures - to peace, beauty and light", Vrestin is finally able to enlist the help of the Optera in the attack upon the Animus. For the Optera, when they begin life above ground, their own descendants will return to flight as their wings develop again.

THE ANIMUS: The nature of this creature can be gathered by its calm voice. It provides a contrast to the chirruping Zarbi and high-pitched Menoptra, and carries with it subtle menace. The Animus is by no means an arrogant conqueror, but a cold, collective brain, all-too aware of the threats aimed against it.

TECHNICAL OBSERVATIONS

Before this serial ever went into the studio large amounts of film work were done at the Ealing studios for most of the exterior shots on Vortis for episodes one and four. The Menoptra invasion sequence was the most difficult to do, and so was done first. This explains why the Ealing photographs of the Menoptra show them with slightly different head masks to those worn in the TV Centre studios, where the cowl masks were replaced by tighter fitting and more detailed masks.

To make Vortis look misty, and to hide the backdrops of the sky and distant crags, the film and TV cameras had Vaseline smeared onto their lenses to slightly distort the recorded images.

Single wire flying harnesses were used for those Menoptra required to fly.

When the Animus prevented the TARDIS systems from working, the Doctor opened the door using his ring, which he passed before a photo-electric cell set near the Astral Map emplacement.

All the shots of the Vortis exteriors had the sound echoed to give speech a hollow, ringing note.

A glass painting was used in superimposition for the scene of the Doctor and Ian gazing up at the majestic pyramid crowned by a statue of a Menoptra in flight.

For safety reasons a separate telecine insert was done for the shot of the Coal Hill tie being dipped into the pool of formic acid.

Two scenes in the first episode made use of the TARDIS console's facility to rotate on its single pedestal axis. Usually this ability is used only as a labour saving device to enable cameras to home in onto the desired control panel; but was here used as a demonstration of the power of the Animus.

In episodes one and two Ian and the Doctor wore white Atmospheric Density jackets to counter the thin air of Vortis.

Several large model stages of Vortis were made for this serial, one example of which featured in episode two for the shots of the TARDIS being dragged, by the magnetic power of the Animus, towards the web city, or "khazenome". A small model Zarbi even featured in one shot.

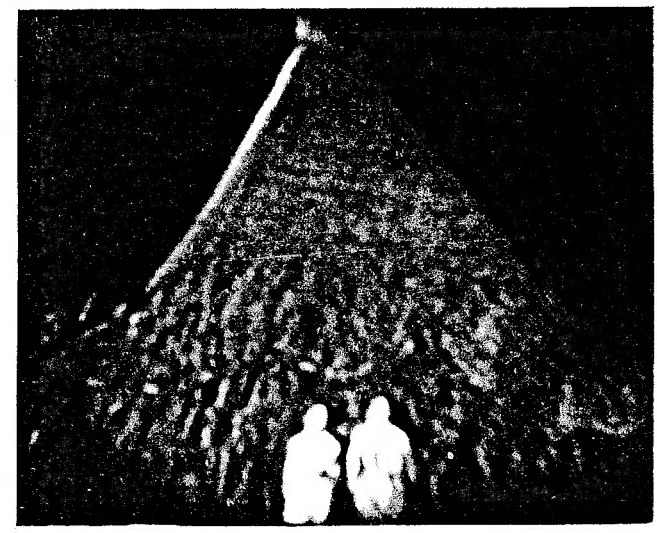
The Menoptra pilot party's communicator was a large, jagged crystal, the spars of which were arranged in random patterns to locate the different frequencies.

In line with the agreement allowing an artist occasional breaks during a season's recording, Jacqueline Hill (Barbara) did not feature in episode three.

One model set which had to be abandoned, due to cost and time, was the web city, which was to have debuted in a spectacular glass shot, with Ian and the Doctor looking down upon its sprawling tendrils.

Model stages used for Vortis exterior, entrance to the khazenome, the Crater of Needles, the 'huts' for the Menoptra slaves, the Temple of Light upper galleries, and the Sayo Plateau top.

The Doctor communicates with the Animus.



The Doctor and Ian look up at the Menoptra monument.

The Menoptra electron guns were working props. When the triggers were pulled twin prongs shot out from the front to indicate the weapons being fired.

Focal point of attention on the larvae guns was the venom-spitting snout. For scenes where the larvae unleashed their lethal venom small electrically-actuated flash charges were fitted to the ends of the snouts, with the twin wires leading back into the main body of the costume. Actor Jack Pitt was never once visible beneath the larvae gun cowls, as a second layer of dark skirting was fitted within the ring of 'legs'. A special effects technician was responsible for setting off the flash charges.

Extensive use of dry ice was made for this serial to enhance the image of Vortis as an enshrouded world. Both the live, the film and the model sets featured dry ice.

A vacuum former was used to make the husks of the dead Menoptra seen in episode one - as Ian puts his foot through one - and episode five - inside the Temple of Light.

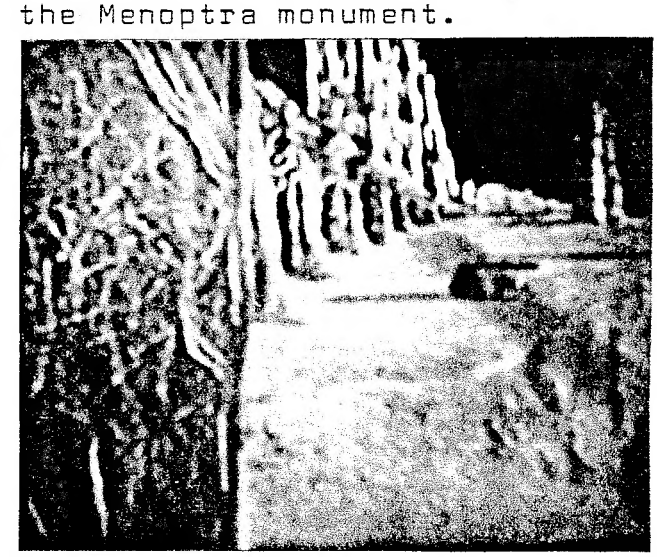
Although very little of the khazenome's ability to expand was ever seen on television, the gateway to the city did feature several hollow tendrils and puff balls which were slowly filling out as air was pumped into their inside by studio props personnel.

A dancer by profession, Roslyn de Winter loaned her services to this production to choreograph the movements of the Menoptra to make them appear very graceful, almost balletic, and demonstrative in movement.

The khazenome control room had a defence mechanism in the form of a flexible larvae gun snout which periodically emerged from one wall. This was a simple sleeve through which the Effects man could slip one arm to operate the flash discharger when required.

The Optera costumes were equipped with six arm sleeves (not including the legs), and the artist's own arms fitted into the bottom-most set of sleeves.

The spectacular Animus set was a tendril-carpeted chamber, with the giant 'spider cyndron' suspended above a brilliant light-radiating dais which pulsed as the creature spoke. When the creature was eventually killed by the Isop-tope, the light globe collapsed in on itself and the 'cyndron' was released from its wire and crashed on top of it.



The entrance to the khazenome.

DOCTOR WHO PRODUCTION CREDITS

Compiled by GARY HOPKINS

SERIAL "N" SIX EPISODES BLACK AND WHITE

"THE WEB PLANET"	-	13th. February 1965
"THE ZARBI"	-	20th. February 1965
"ESCAPE TO DANGER"	-	27th. February 1965
"CRATER OF NEEDLES"	-	6th. March 1965
"INVASION"	-	13th. March 1965
"THE CENTRE"	-	20th. March 1965

CAST

DOCTOR WHO.....WILLIAM HARTNELL
IAN CHESTERTON.....WILLIAM RUSSELL
BARBARA WRIGHT.....JACQUELINE HILL
VICKI.....MAUREEN O'BRIEN

THE ZARBI:

JACK PITT, ROBERT JEWELL
GERALD TAYLOR, HUGH LUND
JOHN SCOTT MARTIN
KEVIN MANSER

THE MENOPTRA:

VRESTIN.....ROSLYN DE WINTER
HROSTAR.....ARNE GORDON
HRHOONDA.....ARTHUR BLAKE
PRAPILLUS.....JOLYON BOOTH
HLYNIA.....JOCELYN BIRDSALL
HILIO.....MARTIN JARVIS

THE OPTERA:

HETRA.....IAN THOMPSON
NEMINI.....BARBARA JOSS

ANIMUS VOICE
CATHERINE FLEMING

WALK-ONS.....KEN McGARVY
LEN RUSSELL
JANE BOWMAN

CREW

Insect movement by Roslyn de Winter

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....NORMAN STEWART
ASSISTANT FLOOR MANAGER....GILLIAN CHARDET
FILM CAMERAMAN.....PETER HAMILTON
FILM EDITOR.....GITTA ZADEK
LIGHTING.....RALPH WALTON
SOUND.....RAY ANGEL
COSTUME SUPERVISOR.....DAPHNE DARE
MAKE-UP SUPERVISOR.....SONIA MARKHAM
STORY EDITOR.....DENNIS SPOONER
DESIGNER.....JOHN WOOD
PRODUCER.....VERITY LAMBERT
DIRECTOR.....RICHARD MARTIN

"I think everybody got a bit too carried away with this story. Yes, it was a good idea...If we could have had a big budget it could have been a very good idea...Everyone got inspired, and in TV inspiretion costs money. In other words, the costume designers suddenly said, 'No, we're not going to skimp on this one', and so did all the others... It all got out of hand, because nobody would back-track on it; and with that serial, more than any other, there was a sort of private war...Not war where no-one was talking, but department began to go against department. Usually in 'Doctor Who', if you say to wardrobe: 'You're overspending!' they'd say 'Sorry', and cut it. On "The Web Planet", if you said to wardrobe, 'Save £1 000', they'd say, 'Why can't Make-up save it?'. It lost by virtue of the fact it was one of the few serials that I think departments pushed their own departments to the exclusion of the show.

"Zarbi! That's probably where we lost out. They were very good in sketches; the designers were determined to lose the human shape, which is why they had this cocoon-like shape, and had to walk at 90 degrees...They could never do it. God, it was a mess in the studio! Those bloody ants took up all the room. It was a terrible show in the studio...Six of those things in, and they couldn't see where they were going! William Hartnell was very tetchy anyway, basically, and he couldn't go where he wanted to go. Directors used to allow Bill Hartnell to walk where he wanted to, and then put all the other actors where he wasn't, basically. But with these bloody Zarbi, he had to be dead exact, and it irritated him...It's hard to explain the atmosphere of that show...I think we went too far. I wouldn't have gone that far, in fact, and I know that Verity got a bit upset..."

DENNIS SPOONER